Listing of Claims:

1.   (Currently Amended) A defective pixel detector adapted
to detect a defective pixel contained in pixel data produced ~~out
of~~ by a solid-state imaging device, ~~characterized by~~ said
defective pixel detector comprising~~,~~:

5   ~~a~~ normal pixel detection means for detecting ~~out~~ a ~~normal~~
pixel to be factored out from ~~said~~ among a plurality of pixels of
the pixel data based on a pixel to be inspected and a neighboring
pixel around the pixel to be inspected, and for factoring out the
detected pixel; and

10   ~~a~~ defective pixel detection means for detecting a defective
pixel out of remaining pixels from among the plurality of pixels
that are not factored out by said normal pixel detection means.

2.   (Currently Amended) ~~A~~ The defective pixel detector as
recited in claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein said normal
pixel detection means comprises ~~a~~ level difference calculation
means ~~adapted to calculate~~ for calculating a level difference

5   between the pixel to be inspected and ~~an~~ the neighboring pixel,
and ~~a~~ comparison means ~~adapted to compare~~ for comparing said
level difference with a first threshold, so that when said level
difference is less than said first threshold, the pixel to be
inspected is determined ~~as normal~~ to be factored out.

    3. (Currently Amended) ~~A~~ The defective pixel detector as recited in claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein said normal pixel detection means comprises ~~a~~ level difference calculation means ~~adapted to calculate~~ for calculating level differences

5   between the pixel to be inspected and a plurality of neighboring pixels, ~~a~~ comparison means ~~adapted to compare~~ for comparing each of said plurality of level differences calculated ~~at~~ by said level difference calculation means with a first threshold, and a determination block adapted to calculate ~~the~~ a number of

10   neighboring pixels at which said level difference is less than said first threshold, and to compare the number of neighboring pixels calculated by said calculation with a second threshold, so that when said number of neighboring pixels is greater than said second threshold, the pixel to be inspected is determined ~~as~~

15   ~~normal~~ to be factored out.

    4. (Currently Amended) ~~A~~ The defective pixel detector as recited in claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein said normal pixel detection means ~~has~~ comprises a memory ~~for holding~~ which holds the pixel to be inspected, and which also ~~works~~ operates as

5   a memory ~~of~~ for said defective pixel detection means.

    5. (Currently Amended) ~~A~~ The defective pixel detector as recited in claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein said defective

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pixel detection means advances to a low power consumption mode

with clocks stopped when the pixel to be inspected is determined

at ~~by~~ said normal pixel detection means ~~as normal~~ <u>to be factored</u>

<u>out</u>.

    6.   (Currently Amended) A defective pixel detection ~~process~~

<u>method</u> ~~, characterized by~~ comprising ~~the steps of~~:

        ~~detecting a normal pixel out of~~ <u>holding in a memory a pixel</u>

<u>to be inspected and a neighboring pixel around the pixel to be</u>

<u>inspected from among a plurality of pixels of</u> pixel data produced

~~out of~~ <u>by</u> a solid-state imaging device,

        <u>detecting a pixel to be factored out based on the pixel to</u>

<u>be inspected and the neighboring pixel;</u>

        factoring out said detected ~~normal~~ pixel, and

        detecting a defective pixel out of <u>remaining</u> pixels from

~~which said normal pixel has~~ <u>among the plurality of pixels that</u>

<u>have not</u> been factored out.

    7.   (Currently Amended) ~~A~~ <u>The</u> defective pixel detection

~~process~~ <u>method</u> as recited in claim 6, ~~characterized in that at~~

~~the step of~~ <u>wherein when</u> detecting said ~~normal~~ pixel <u>to be</u>

<u>factored out</u>, a level difference between the pixel to be

inspected and ~~a~~ <u>the</u> neighboring pixel is calculated, and the

<u>calculated</u> level difference ~~calculated by said calculation~~ is

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compared with a first threshold, so that the pixel to be

inspected is determined ~~as normal~~ to be factored out when ~~, as a~~

~~result of said comparison,~~ the calculated level difference is

10   less than the first threshold.

        8.   (Currently Amended) ~~A~~ The defective pixel detection

~~process~~ method as recited in claim 6, ~~characterized in that at~~

~~the step of~~ wherein when detecting said ~~normal~~ pixel to be

factored out, level differences between the pixel to be inspected

and a plurality of neighboring pixels are calculated, ~~, said~~

~~plurality of~~ the calculated level differences ~~found by said~~

~~calculation~~ are each compared with a first threshold, ~~, from~~

~~results of said comparisons, the~~ a number of neighboring pixels

at which said level differences are less than said first

threshold is calculated, [[;]] and the number of neighboring

pixels found by said calculation is compared with a second

threshold, so that when said number of neighboring pixels is

greater than said second threshold, the pixel to be inspected is

determined ~~as normal~~ to be factored out.

        9.   (Currently Amended) An imaging system ~~comprising~~ having

a defective pixel detector adapted to detect a defective pixel

contained in pixel data produced ~~out of~~ by a solid-state imaging

device, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein said defective pixel

detector comprises~~:~~:

   ~~a~~ normal pixel detection means for detecting ~~out~~ a ~~normal~~

pixel to be factored out from ~~said~~ among a plurality of pixels of

the pixel data based on a pixel to be inspected and a neighboring

pixel around the pixel to be inspected, and for factoring out the

detected pixel; and

   ~~a~~ defective pixel detection means for detecting a defective

pixel out of remaining pixels from among the plurality of pixels

that are not factored out by said normal pixel detection means.

   10.   (Currently Amended) ~~An~~ The imaging system as recited in

claim 9, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein said normal pixel

detection means comprises ~~a~~ level difference calculation means

~~adapted to calculate~~ for calculating a level difference between

the pixel to be inspected and ~~an~~ the neighboring pixel, and ~~a~~

comparison means ~~adapted to compare~~ for comparing said level

difference with a first threshold, so that when said level

difference is less than said first threshold, the pixel to be

inspected is determined ~~as normal~~ to be factored out.

   11. (Currently Amended) ~~An~~ The imaging system as recited in

claim 9, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein said normal pixel

detection means comprises ~~a~~ level difference calculation means

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adapted to calculate ~~adapted to calculate~~ <u>for calculating</u> level differences between

the pixel to be inspected and a plurality of neighboring pixels,

~~a~~ comparison means ~~adapted to compare~~ <u>for comparing</u> each of said

plurality of level differences calculated ~~at~~ <u>by</u> said level

difference calculation means with a first threshold, and a

determination block adapted to ~~use the result of comparison at by~~

~~said comparison means to~~ calculate ~~the~~ <u>a</u> number of neighboring

pixels at which said level difference is less than said first

threshold, and to compare the number of neighboring pixels

calculated by said calculation with a second threshold, so that

when said number of neighboring pixels at which the said level

difference is less than said first threshold is greater than said

second threshold, the pixel to be inspected is determined ~~as~~

~~normal~~ <u>to be factored out</u>.

        12. (Currently Amended) ~~A~~ <u>The</u> defective pixel detector as

recited in claim 2, ~~characterized in that~~ <u>wherein</u> said normal

pixel detection means ~~has~~ <u>comprises</u> a memory ~~for holding~~ <u>which</u>

<u>holds</u> the pixel to be inspected, <u>and</u> which also ~~works~~ <u>operates</u> as

a memory ~~of~~ <u>for</u> said defective pixel detection means.

        13. (Currently Amended) ~~A~~ <u>The</u> defective pixel detector as

recited in claim 12, ~~characterized in that~~ <u>wherein</u> said defective

pixel detection means advances to a low power consumption mode

with clocks stopped when the pixel to be inspected is determined

at by said normal pixel detection means as normal to be factored

out.

14. (Currently Amended) A The defective pixel detector as

recited in claim 3, characterized in that wherein said normal

pixel detection means has comprises a memory for holding which

holds the pixel to be inspected, and which also works operates as

a memory of for said defective pixel detection means.

15. (Currently Amended) A The defective pixel detector as

recited in claim 14, characterized in that wherein said defective

pixel detection means advances to a low power consumption mode

with clocks stopped when the pixel to be inspected is determined

at by said normal pixel detection means as normal to be factored

out.

16. (Currently Amended) A The defective pixel detector as

recited in claim 2, characterized in that wherein said defective

pixel detection means advances to a low power consumption mode

with clocks stopped when the pixel to be inspected is determined

at by said normal pixel detection means as normal to be factored

out.

17.   (Currently Amended) ~~A~~ The defective pixel detector as recited in claim 3, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein said defective pixel detection means advances to a low power consumption mode with clocks stopped when the pixel to be inspected is determined ~~at~~ by said normal pixel detection means ~~as normal~~ to be factored out.

18.   (Currently Amended) ~~A~~ The defective pixel detector as recited in claim 4, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein said defective pixel detection means advances to a low power consumption mode with clocks stopped when the pixel to be inspected is determined ~~at~~ by said normal pixel detection means ~~as normal~~ to be factored out.

19.   (New) A defective pixel detector as recited in claim 1, wherein said pixel to be factored out is a normal pixel.

20.   (New) A defective pixel detection method as recited in claim 6, wherein said pixel to be factored out is a normal pixel.

21.   (New) A defective pixel detector as recited in claim 9, wherein said pixel to be factored out is a normal pixel.

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